

## NELSON COUNTY BROADBAND PROJECT UPDATE – OCTOBER 2012



### PROJECT PROGRESS

As we enter October, the majority of construction is complete for the all underground fiber network that extends from the intersection of Critzer Shop Road (Highway 151) and Afton Mountain Road (Highway 6) south to River Road (Highway 6) then south down US 29, through Lovington and into the Colleen Business Park. Citizens will continue to see construction personnel around and about the County performing final construction tasks to close out the fiber construction portion of the broadband project. Thirteen community facilities including County, Commonwealth, Schools and the Blue Ridge Medical Center committed to serve as anchor customers and purchase services on the new network to make it more attractive to private providers. Connectivity to all of those community facilities will be complete within the next couple of weeks at which time they will be ready for service from the provider of their choice. Equipment is in process of being installed in the network operation center at the courthouse where private providers will access the county network to provide services.

Following a competitive bidding process, the County has selected Lumos Networks for broadband services including phone service to county facilities only. By owning the network connecting the County facilities, County Administration has been able to secure higher bandwidth service that will be shared between all facilities while eliminating the individual leased circuits that previously comprised the County network. That high speed bandwidth will be more efficiently utilized between all of the County offices, enable new online services to citizens, and reallocate precious financial resources.

The next phase of the broadband project is to construct the towers that will enable providers to broadcast wireless broadband service out into the county. At the Rockfish Valley Volunteer Fire Department on Highway 151 and beside the Martin's Store electric substation at the intersection of River Road and Highway 151, clearing and grading is underway in preparation for erecting 140 foot monopole towers. Watch for the towers to appear near the very end of October or first week of November. One additional tower is planned for the Massie's Mill area but is still in the planning and due diligence stage.

While the contractors have been hard at work putting conduit and fiber cable in the ground, County personnel have been busy with the administrative, legal and marketing aspects of network ownership. The terms of the Federal grant mandate the middle-mile network to be 'Open Access' and available to all providers. The County has worked hard to get funding for and build the high speed fiber highway that will enable broadband providers to get to work in Nelson. Lumos Networks is the first provider to indicate their intent to sell service to private businesses within reach of the fiber network, and we expect our loyal local providers will take advantage of the new fiber and towers to expand their services to residents as well. The Economic Development and Tourism staff are currently working on a marketing plan to get the word out to all providers in the region that the **Nelson County Broadband Network is 'Open for Business'.**

We appreciate your patience throughout construction. Construction along our roads coincided with many days of rain that delayed work and kept straw and seed crews busy. Our beautiful, narrow, River Road winding through areas of solid rock challenged the boring and plowing crews at every turn. Over the course of the last 6 months Nelson County businesses have benefitted from having 4 to 5 crews (25-30 people) working, eating and living here every Monday through Thursday. One of our local businesses - G and L Underground Construction in Shipman - participated in the construction of the fiber network. We are all appreciative of the economic stimulus this project has provided to our local businesses and the citizens that live and work here.

Additional Resources for Information:

Nelson County Project Map: [Nelson County NT10BIX5570049 Project Map](#)

Board of Supervisors: <http://nelsoncounty.com/boardofsupervisors/broadband-project/>

Check out the Commonwealth's broadband mapping and Nelson County's status in particular <http://www.broadbandmap.gov/summarize/state/virginia/county/nelson> (illustrates why we are building this fiber network)

Link to the NTIA Broadband USA project site: <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/grantees/NelsonCounty>

